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ABSTRACT

Designed to accompany a slide and tape package, this booklet outlines the role parents can take in children's language development. Following an introduction which familiarizes parents with the concepts of receptive language (comprehension of spoken language) and expressive language (the information a person is trying to communicate and the form that communication takes), the material can be divided into two sections. Section 1, dealing with methods for teaching receptive language, includes general suggestions, suggestions for encouraging non-verbal children, and brief discussions of self-talk, parallel talk, dysfluency, modeling, and vocabulary development. Section 2 offers several specific activities for developing each of the following concepts: following directions, body parts, object identification, picture identification, action words, spatial relationships, colors, and classification. For each activity, materials and procedures are outlined. A vocabulary list is included. (LP)

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You, Your Child, And Language

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Activities for Language Development
Meyer Children's Rehabilitation Institute

You, Your Child, and Language: Activities for Language Development was produced by the Media Resource Center at Meyer Children's Rehabilitation Institute (MCRI), with consultation provided by the MCRI Department of Speech and Language Pathology.

This booklet is designed to accompany a two-part slide/tape package which further outlines specific activities for language development. Part I provides methods for teaching receptive language skills, and Part II provides techniques for stimulating expressive language development.

For information on rental or purchase of the slide/tape package, contact the Media Resource Center at Meyer Children's Rehabilitation Institute, 444 South 44th Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68131, (402) 559-7467. A free *Media Resource Listing* outlining all MCRI produced media is also available upon request.

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YOU, YOUR CHILD, AND LANGUAGE:

Activities for Language Development

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INTRODUCTION

The activities and suggestions in this booklet are designed to promote the development of both receptive and expressive language. *Receptive language* refers to comprehension — understanding what is heard. This includes not only understanding the words that are spoken but, also, understanding how the words are combined and how combining them in various ways changes meaning (pencil on book vs. book on pencil). Comprehension of various types of sentence structure is a part of this process.



Expressive language is the information a person is trying to communicate and the form that information takes (single word, phrase, sentence, etc.). The vocabulary a child uses and how words are combined to express ideas are examples of expressive language.

People express themselves in many ways — speech, gesture, sign, written words, etc. Speech is by far the most common means of expression and, as such, is often confused with expressive language. However, speech refers to *articulation skills* (how



sounds are produced), fluency, and voice quality. The activities in this booklet do not deal with speech skills other than suggesting that a good model be provided.

It is generally thought that receptive language skills should be taught before expression is expected. Thus, you should teach a child to select objects and pictures as you name them before expecting the child to name these objects and pictures independently. While children are often able to imitate, they must understand words before they are able to use them *meaningfully*.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

1. Talk — you are your child's model. Speak slowly, clearly, and in simple sentences.
2. Name objects, even familiar ones, whenever handling them.
3. When your child talks, avoid interrupting.
4. When other family members are conversing, give the child a chance to verbalize. Ask questions and encourage all verbalizations, however limited they may be.
5. When your child first begins to speak, do not be concerned with clarity. The main emphasis at this time is encouraging verbal expression, regardless of quality.
6. Talk to your child in such a way that he or she has a chance to talk, too. When your child shows an interest in an object, share that interest. Name the object. Make a brief remark about it. Give your child a chance to say something. Often a child will talk to fill silence.
7. Use a variety of techniques to get your child to look at your face while you are talking. Hold the object close to your face to draw the child's attention in that direction.
8. Encourage and reinforce any attempt your child may make to communicate by acting on the child's request or responding to your child's speech with some sign that you have heard. This could be with a smile, a nod, or a verbal response.



SELF-TALK

Talk out loud about what you are doing. Let your child know there are words to describe all sorts of activities. For example, as you are washing the clothes, dusting the furniture, making the beds, setting the table, washing the car, etc., talk about what you are doing. Be sure to use slow, clear, simple words and short phrases.



PARALLEL-TALK

Parallel-talk differs from self-talk only in that you talk about what is happening to your child rather than to yourself. As your child plays, verbalize what he or she is doing. Use words to describe your child's activities. This gives your child words with which to think.

ENCOURAGING THE NONVERBAL CHILD

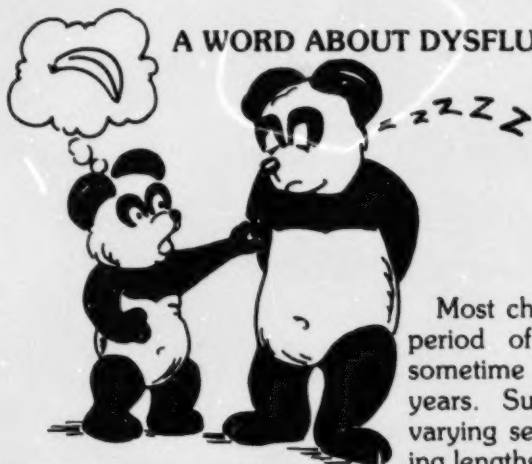
1. Encourage and strongly reinforce any verbalizations your child attempts, even if these verbalizations are not meaningful. Imitate some of this vocal play and encourage your child, in turn, to imitate you.
2. Encourage and try to promote any type of direct imitation. If your child is unwilling to engage in *verbal* imitation, try to initiate *motor* imitation activities. This can often be done through the use of nursery rhymes and finger play (such as pat-a-cake).



3. Need situations should be structured which involve appetite stimuli, or toy or object stimuli using words similar to the following:

milk	cookie	candy	ball	baby
water	drink	mamma	daddy	dog

4. Puppets with moveable jaws are good stimuli for eliciting verbal expression, even if it's just "hi," "bye," or "how are you?"
5. When a child is in the beginning stages of expressive language development, it is important to stress the power of verbal communication (i.e., it can be used to obtain a desired result). Using another family member is often helpful in providing an example for the child. When eating a favorite food (cookie, candy, etc.) the person who says "more" has this request acted upon. The same can be done when asking for toys out of reach. However, try not to establish a situation in which the child is punished for not verbalizing.



A WORD ABOUT DYSFLUENCY

I want a... I want a... I want a...

Most children go through a period of verbal dysfluency sometime in their preschool years. Such periods are of varying severity and for varying lengths of time. Frequently parents become concerned that their child may be developing a "stuttering" problem. Although there are times when this may be true, a period of dysfluency is usually a normal occurrence. In these cases it is best to ignore the dysfluency and concentrate on *what* your child is saying and not *how* it is said. A list of "don't's" to remember is: 1) don't ask the child to slow down; 2) don't ask the child to start over; 3) don't finish the word or sentence for the child; 4) don't mention the dysfluency in any way. Simply maintain eye contact and allow the child to finish at his or her own rate.

MODELING AND EXPANSION

When your child is at the point in expressive language development when phrases and short sentences are used, there are two language stimulation techniques which are particularly helpful. The first of these is called *modeling*. Modeling involves giving your child the correct form or pronunciation for something said incorrectly or left incomplete. For example, if your child says, "Her going," your comment should be "That's right. She is going." In no way indicate to the child that there was anything wrong with sentence production; simply comment on the content and repeat it correctly. The same can be done when the error involves faulty pronunciation. In this way the last thing the child hears is the correct production.

A similar language stimulation technique is known as *expansion*. Expansion involves adding to what the child says, making the utterance longer or at the next level of complexity. For example, if your child says "I want truck," you can expand the utterance to include a descriptive word by saying "You want the big truck?" In this way the child is hearing a model of the kind of utterance that will likely develop next.



VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

There are many things that can be done as part of a child's daily routine to enhance vocabulary development. Although encouraging verbalization from the child is part of this process, the major factor in vocabulary stimulation is for the parent or teacher to increase or modify what is said to the child.

Get in the habit of talking with your child. This is easiest and most naturally done if you start when the child is an infant.

However, it is never too late to begin. Make casual, fairly short comments about what you, another member of the family, or the child is doing. It cannot be stressed enough that this should be an almost constant part of your interaction with the child. It is not necessary that you make a deliberate effort to get the child's attention first. Don't worry if the child does not appear to be listening. Your information-bearing comments will simply become part of the child's environment.

With a very young child or a child with very limited vocabulary, the information most appropriate to convey will be the names of objects or actions, thus building an initial vocabulary of nouns and verbs. As the child gets older and begins to use these words in conversation, switch your emphasis to include prepositions, color names, and descriptive words, in addition to a more advanced vocabulary of nouns and verbs. An example of the change in vocabulary is the following:

Situation: Child is watching or helping mother make cookies. (Emphasized words are italicized.)



Early Vocabulary

Mommy is going to make cookies. You can help. Here's some *butter*. I'll put it in the *bowl* — this is a big *bowl*. We need to *break* an egg — there, see, the egg is *broken*. Let's *throw* away the *shell*. Now let's *pour* in the *sugar*. You are a good helper.



Later Vocabulary

Let's make cookies. You can help me *bake*. The butter is in the bowl — but is it *soft* yet? Feel the butter to see if it's *soft*. Let's put the sugar in a *measuring cup*. We need eggs — see, I have *two*. We must be *careful*, it's *easy* to break eggs. I'll *crack* them and you can put them in the bowl. You sure are a good helper.

The same kind of vocabulary selection and differentiation can be done with children's storybooks. The vocabulary in a storybook is often too difficult for a child, even though the pictures and general story line may be appropriate. Talk about the pictures with your child, let the child comment, and then tell the story in simple terms. The vocabulary you use can be changed as the child's language skills develop. When the child's comprehension of language is sufficient, you can read the story as printed. Children generally like books and stories, and helping them to enjoy books on their own level will make the experience even more pleasant.

SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES



A. Following Directions

1. Materials: None needed.

Teach the child to respond appropriately to simple instructions such as:

Stand up.	Turn around.
Sit down.	Give it to me.
Close the door.	Come here.
Open the door.	Get it.

2. Materials: None needed.

After the child has learned body parts, include those words in your commands:

Show me your hand.	Shake your head.
Touch your eyes.	Put your finger up.
Look at my foot.	Rub your tummy.

3. Materials: None needed.

As action words, objects' names, and prepositions become increasingly familiar to the child, your commands can become longer and more complex:

Wave your hand.	Pretend to drink some water.
Stomp your foot.	Look for the ball.

B. Body Concepts

1. Materials: None needed.

A child should be able to point to body parts when they are named before being expected to name them. Familiarize the child with body part names during bathing and dressing.

2. Materials: Doll, mirror.

Once the child has learned what each word means, have the child point to the named body parts on his or her own body and on a doll. Use of a mirror is excellent in providing the child with visual feedback, for in this way the child can see the appropriate body part. Begin work with such body parts as: hair, nose, mouth, eyes, ears, arms, hands, feet, legs, fingers, and toes.

3. Materials: Two paper dolls.

Use two large paper dolls, one with body and facial parts cut out. Have the child practice putting the doll together, either independently or as you name each part. Let the child use the fully assembled doll as a model to determine if the practice doll was put together correctly.

4. Materials: Large paper, crayons.

Trace an outline of the child's body on a piece of paper. Help the child to color in the facial parts and clothing items.

5. Materials: None needed.

When you feel the child knows common body part names as they are heard, begin asking the child to name the parts as you point to them on the child, yourself, or on a doll.

6. Materials: None needed.

As the child becomes better able to identify body parts, begin teaching the action or function of various parts:



We see with our eyes.
We hear with our ears.
We smell with our nose.
We talk with our mouth.
We chew with our teeth.

Then ask the child to point to or name the appropriate body part when you give the function ("Show me what you see with."). When the child can correctly answer the function questions, begin asking questions such as "What do you do with your ears?" In this case you are calling for a verb rather than a noun in response.

7. Materials: Doll, paper dolls.

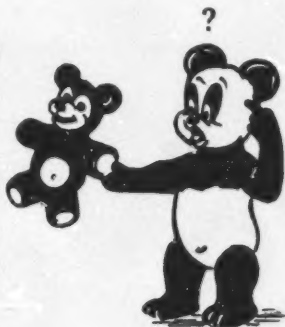
When the child can easily identify the more common body parts, introduce the less common ones, such as cheek, neck, elbow, shoulder, back, wrist, knee, ankle, chin, etc.

In teaching these less familiar body parts, follow the same procedure as you did for common body parts.

C. Object Identification

1. Materials: Common objects such as ball, cup, book, car, spoon, chair, doll, table, bed, apple.

Place an assortment of common objects before the child. Name the objects repeatedly in a variety of ways, e.g., "I have a ball," "We can throw the ball," "I will get the ball."



2. Materials: Assortment of common objects found in the home, including child's toys.

After your child has had repeated exposure to the names of the objects, put three or four on a table and ask the child to select the one named. Use such questions or directions as: "Where is the _____?"; "Show me the _____"; "Give me the _____"; "Put the _____ in the box."

3. Materials: Assortment of common objects found in the home, including child's toys.

After the child can correctly identify common objects as you name them, begin asking *the child* to name the object when it is shown. Do not put undue pressure on the child, but provide the correct response if an object is not named fairly quickly.

4. **Materials:** Doll, common objects.

After the child is able to select a number of objects when they are named, begin to explain and demonstrate the *function* of each object. Demonstrate with a doll by using toy items, such as a toy bed, toy chair.

5. **Materials:** Common objects.

Ask the child to point to the toy or object associated with the functions as you name them:

Show me where you sit.

Show me where you sleep.

Show me what you throw.

Show me what you read.

6. **Materials:** None needed.

Once the child can respond to the directions in number five, ask the child to respond verbally by answering questions calling for the object name or the function.

Where do you sleep?

What do you read?

What do you do with a pencil?

What do you do with a ball?

D. Picture Identification (Nouns)

1. **Materials:** Objects and identical pictures.

Using objects the child can already identify, find pictures of very similar objects (see vocabulary list). Place three or four objects on the table and give the child one picture. The child is to select the matching object.



2. **Materials:** Pictures (see vocabulary list).

Once the child is able to match objects to pictures, ask the child to select the picture you name from an array of several. This can be done by having the child place a block on the picture, point to it, turn it over, hide it, or hand it to you.

3. **Materials:** Pictures, paste, scrapbook.

A scrapbook can be kept by the child in which each day a

new picture is added and learned as recognition vocabulary. Go through the child's book naming the pictures and have the child point to the pictures as they are named.

4. Materials: Pictures (see vocabulary list).

Questions with a "yes" or "no" answer may be used when working on picture identification. Ask the child, "Is this a _____?" At times you should name it correctly and at others you should intentionally incorrectly identify the picture. The answer will tell you whether or not the child is correctly identifying the picture. (Do not use this activity unless the child already has a reliable "yes/no" response.)

5. Materials: Pictures (see vocabulary list).

When the child can accurately point to a number of named pictures, begin asking the child to name the pictures as you point to them. It may be fun to let the child "play teacher," naming each picture and asking you to point.

6. Materials: Pictures (see vocabulary list).

After the child can correctly select a number of named pictures, begin to familiarize the child with the function of the pictured objects. Ask the child to "find the one we sleep on," or "find the one we eat with," for example.

7. Materials: Pictures (see vocabulary list).

Just as with objects, picture identification by function can be done using questions with "yes" or "no" answers. Ask the child such questions as: "Do we eat coats?" or "Do we wear bread?" while pointing to the picture of the item named. The answers will tell you whether or not the child understands the functions of these items. (Do not use this activity unless the child already has a reliable "yes/no" response.)

E. Action Words

1. Materials: None needed.

Begin teaching action words by demonstrating to the child the action words often heard (sit, stand, run, jump, eat, sleep, etc.). Encourage the child to imitate as you demonstrate the actions.

2. Materials: None needed.

As the child becomes more familiar with action words, ask



the child to demonstrate the actions as you name them. As this is done, reinforce the word by using it in a sentence. For example, "That's right, you are running." Begin to expand the number of action words the child understands by gradually introducing the action words on the vocabulary list.

3. Materials: Pictured actions, paste, scrapbook.

Place three or four pictures of action words on a table. As with the nouns, name an action and ask the child to point to the picture in which it is depicted. These pictures can be put in a scrapbook.

4. Materials: Pictures of action words.

Questions with "yes/no" answers can be used for comprehension of action words. While looking at an action picture ask, "Is he running?" You should name the action correctly sometimes, and at other times you should purposely name it incorrectly. The child's answer will indicate whether or not the action is understood. (Do not use this activity unless the child already has a reliable "yes/no" response.)

5. Materials: Storybook.

Identification of action pictures can also be done using a storybook containing many pictures. It may be easier to hold your child's interest by interjecting questions as you are telling the story.

6. Materials: None needed.

Expressive identification of actions can begin after the child understands a number of action words. Begin by asking the child to give the action word to describe his or her actions, or your own. In this way the child is learning first to name those actions seen most often, such as running, walking, sleeping, eating, sitting, playing, watching, listening, cooking, and washing.

7. Materials: Books, magazines, or pictures.

When the child is able to do the above activity, begin having the child name actions in pictures. Use magazines, storybooks, or the scrapbook mentioned previously.

F. Comprehension of Spatial Relationships (In, On, Under, Behind)

1. Materials: Two cups, blocks (or other small objects). One cup turned over, one cup upright.

Put a block *in* the upright cup. Tell your child this block is *in* the cup. Instruct your child to put another block *in* the cup. Continue until several blocks are *in* the cup.

Put a block *on* the cup that is turned over. Tell your child this block is *on* the cup. Instruct your child to put another block *on* the cup. Continue until several blocks are *on* the cup.

Now, take all the blocks from the cups. Place in front of the child and alternate instructions to put a block *in* or *on* the cup. These same procedures can be followed for teaching under, behind, or other prepositions, utilizing additional materials.

2. Materials: Objects to be placed in some position relative to other objects in the room.

Instruct the child to find something that is *under* the table, *in* the chair, *on* the table, *behind* the door, etc.

3. Materials: Large and small boxes.

Child is to follow such directions as:

Put your hand *in* the box.

Stand *behind* the box.

Get *under* the box.

Get *on* the box.



4. Materials: Various household objects.

Objects should be placed in various positions around the room. After the child understands and can follow directions containing prepositions, ask the child to tell you where an object is in relationship to another object, such as:

"Where is the book?" ("On the table.")

"Where is the ball?" ("Under the chair.")

"Where is your coat?" ("Behind the door.")

5. Materials: Books, magazines, pictures.

Ask the child to answer questions such as those above in regard to pictures in books and magazines.

6. Materials: Same as above.

Use the same procedures to teach less familiar spatial concepts, such as beside, in front, by, out, over, etc.

G. Color Concepts
(Red, Blue, Green,
Yellow, Orange,
Purple, Brown,
Black, White)

Matching: Matching colors precedes recognition of colors by name.

1. Materials: Construction paper — red, blue, green, yellow.

Circles or squares are cut out of construction paper, two in each color. Place one circle of each color on the table (do any three or four colors at a time). Hand your child one circle and name its color. Your child is to place that circle on top of a circle of the same color which is on the table. Continue until all colors are sorted. Always name each colored circle as you hand it to your child.

2. Materials: Cans or boxes painted blue, red, green, yellow; beads, blocks or paper to match containers.

The child is asked to place colored blocks (or beads or paper) into a can or box of the same color.

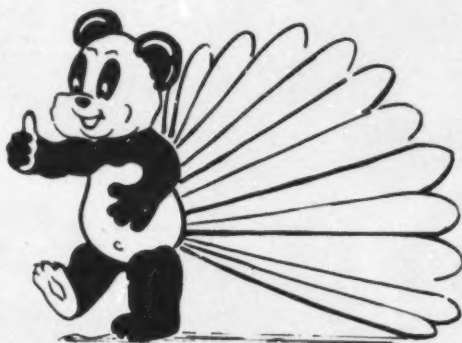
3. Materials: Two sets of crayons in red, blue, green, yellow, and paper.

Give your child a piece of paper. Hold up one of your crayons and name its color. Ask the child to find the crayon that is the same color and have the child mark with it on the paper.

Follow this same procedure with remaining colors.

4. Materials: Clothing or household objects.

When your child is able to match colors, have the child check clothing or objects in the room to find ones of the same color. For example, ask the child to match a blue shirt to a pair of blue pants.



Recognition of Colors by Name

1. Materials: Crayons, sheet of paper.

Give your child a sheet of paper. Name a color. The child should select a crayon in the color named and mark on the paper.

Follow this same procedure for remaining colors.

2. Materials: Small magnet, string, and stick.

Tie string with magnet attached onto stick to make a fishing pole. Cut paper fish from colored construction paper, eight fish for each color. Place paper clips on each fish.

Place various colored fish on the floor and invite your child to "go fishing." Give such directions as, "Catch a red fish." If the correct color of fish is caught, the child may keep the fish. If not, the fish should be "thrown back into the pond" (put back on the floor).

3. Materials: Objects of different colors placed in the room.

Ask your child to find all objects of a certain color in the room. Follow this same procedure for other colors until all objects have been found.

4. Materials: Beads or colored wooden spools and string.

Ask the child to select a bead of a certain color and then have the child thread it on the string.

5. Materials: Child's own clothes.

Ask your child to find all his or her clothes that are of a certain color.

6. Materials: Various.

After the child can identify colors you have named, have the child name specific colors. Use some of the activities previously discussed.

H. Classification

1. Materials: Several pictures of each of several categories, such as hats, cars.

Using a variety of pictures (such as five hats and five cars) mix and then help the child to separate the pictures into two groups, according to object name. For example, ask the child to put all the hats in one pile, and all the cars in another pile.



2. Materials: Pictures of food and clothing. Two small boxes.

Tell your child you are going shopping for *clothes to wear* and *food to eat*. Place a food picture in one box and a clothing picture in another box. Give your child a picture. If it is a food picture, ask the child to put it in the food box, noting that "It is to eat." If it is clothing, ask the child to put it in the clothes box, since "It is to wear." Follow this procedure until the child has classified all food pictures together and all clothing pictures together.

3. Materials: Several pictures in each of several categories.

Follow the same procedure with pictures from other categories, such as toys, animals, plants, or forms of transportation. Within-category classification may also be done. This would include such sub-groupings as zoo and farm animals, fruits and vegetables, things to eat, things to drink.

4. Materials: Possible category pictures.

Once the child can classify by object name and function, have the child name the objects and functions when shown or told the category items.

VOCABULARY LIST

I. PEOPLE

baby	farmer	nurse
barber	fireman	painter
boy	girl	plumber
carpenter	grandfather	policeman
clown	grandmother	soldier
cowboy	mailman	teacher
doctor	man	truck driver
dentist	milkman	woman

II. TOYS

ball	doll	marble
balloon	drum	pail
bat	gun	swing
bike	horn	top
boat	kite	wagon
book		

III. ANIMALS

bat	duck	monkey
bear	elephant	mouse
bee	fish	owl
bird	frog	pig
butterfly	giraffe	puppy
calf	goat	rabbit
camel	goose	sheep
cat	horse	skunk
chicken	kangaroo	snake
chipmunk	kitten	turkey
cow	lamb	turtle
dog	lion	worm

* Based on Peabody Language Development Materials

IV. FOODS

apple	corn	peas
banana	crackers	pepper
beans	eggs	pie
bread	grapes	potato
butter	gum	pumpkin
cake	hamburger	salt
candy	hot dog	soda
carrots	ice cream	soup
celery	juice	strawberries
cheese	lemon	sugar
cherries	lettuce	tea
cocoa	meat	tomato
coffee	milk	water
cookie	orange	

V. PARTS OF THE BODY

ankle	hair	shoulder
arm	head	stomach
ear	knee	tail
elbow	leg	thumb
eye	lip	toe
face	mouth	tongue
feet	neck	tooth
fingers	nose	wrist

VI. CLOTHING

bathing suit	hat	skirt
bib	necklace	slippers
blouse	pajamas	socks
boots	pants	suit
bow	purse	sweater
cap	ring	tie
coat	robe	umbrella
dress	shirt	underwear
glasses	shoe	watch
gloves		

VII. HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

basket	dustpan	plate
bathtub	fan	radio
bed	fork	record player
bowl	frying pan	refrigerator
broom	glass	sewing machine
brush	iron	sink
can opener	key	soap
chair	knife	spoon
chest of drawers	lamp	stove
clock	letter	table
clothespin	mop	telephone
coffee pot	mirror	television
comb	napkin	toilet
couch	newspaper	toothbrush
crayon	pail	toothpaste
crib	pan	towel
cup	paper	washing machine
door	pencil	window

VIII. ACTIONS

brush hair	give	sleep
brush teeth	hop	smile
build	jump	stand
carry	open	swim
close	play	swing
comb	pull	tie
cry	push	walk
cut	read	wash
dress	ride	wave
drink	run	work
drive	shave	write
eat	sit	

IX. OBJECTS IN THE ENVIRONMENT

airplane	fence	police car
ambulance	fire truck	rain
barn	flower	sidewalk
bicycle	flag	stars
boat	grass	stoplight
bus	hose	street
car	house	sun
door	leaf	tractor
farm	mailbox	train
feather	moon	tree

X. ADJECTIVES

big/little	over/under	naughty
clean/dirty	rainy/sunny	sharp
day/night	rough/smooth	sorry
empty/full	sick/well	steep
fat/thin	sleeping/awake	thirsty
fast/slow	tall/short	colors: black
go/stop	up/down	blue
happy/sad	warm/cold	brown
in/out	winter/summer	green
long/short	fine	red
new/old	funny	white
old/young	good	yellow
on/off	hungry	numbers 1-5
open/closed		

XI. PREPOSITIONS

behind	in	on
beside	in front	under

XII. PLACES

church	park	store
home	school	

SUMMARY

The simple, at-home activities described in this booklet emphasize you, the parent, as the prime influence in a child's language development.

The activities are designed to be both instructional and pleasurable — your child should *enjoy* learning to use language. While you are assisting your child in the learning process it is important to downplay achievement for achievement's sake.

The methods in this booklet, coupled with your care and attention, provide you with an effective educational tool. So relax, learn . . . and most of all, have fun.

